Backyard Woods: *Bring Your Vision to Life*

The Challenge

The fastest growing segment of the forest landowner population are those that own one to ten acres of forestland. Currently 6 million Americans fall into this category and each year it grows by an additional 25,000 landowners.

The USDA Forest Service and state forestry agencies have a long history of providing technical assistance to forest landowners. However, the rapidly increasing number of forest landowner requests are quickly overwhelming our current capacity to respond. Many of these landowners do not realize the ecological and financial benefits of good forest management and may not realize the impacts their everyday decisions can have on forest health, wildlife habitat, and water quality. How can we reach this massive audience with information that is relevant to their needs while at the same time guiding them to make good land management decisions?

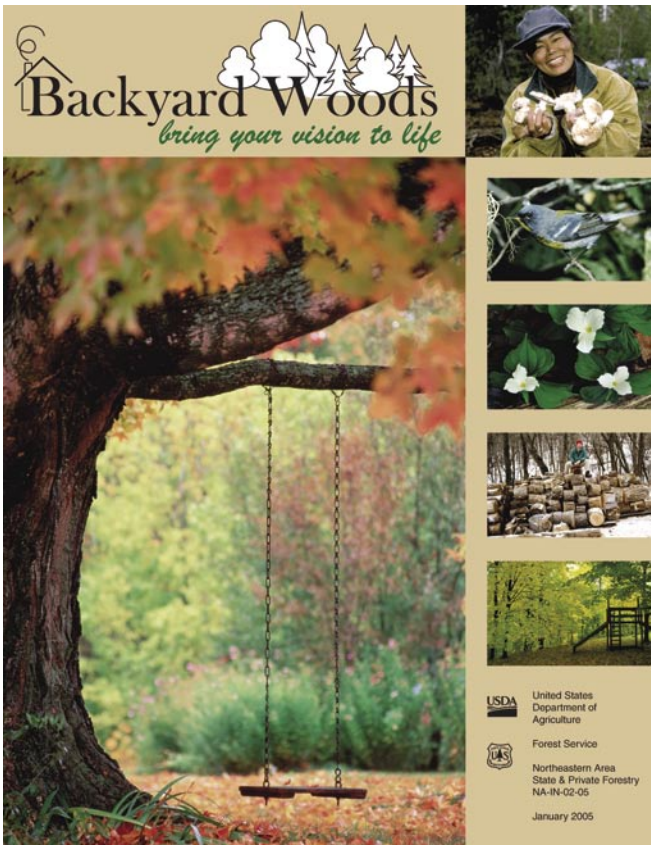
The Solution

The Northeastern Area State and Private Forestry Program, in cooperation with state forestry agencies, nonprofits, and private forestry consultants has developed "Backyard Woods" — a technical assistance campaign specifically tailored to small landowners. Backyard Woods is designed to provide landowners with practical, everyday activities to improve and care for forestland. Backyard Woods includes a comprehensive 'how to' guide on improving forestland, a series of in-depth tip sheets, as well as a web site and a guide to additional informational resources.

Resulting Benefits

Providing landowners with the latest information on tree and land care may change current behaviors, resulting in forests that are healthier, less susceptible to wildfire, more productive as well as aesthetically pleasing. In addition, if adjacent landowners manage their land responsibly, some of the current impacts of parcelization and fragmentation may be reduced. Finally, through hands-on experiences improving their own forests, landowners may understand the need for caring for and improving the health of the nation's forests.

Backyard Woods provides an opportunity to connect landowners' everyday decisions to what occurs on a larger scale on our public forest lands.



Backyard Woods includes a comprehensive 'how to' guide for improving your backyard forest.

Sharing Success

The USDA Forest Service Northeastern Area and the National Arbor Day Foundation will begin promoting Backyard Woods in Spring of 2005. This partnership will allow the US Forest Service to provide targeted forestry information to the National Arbor Day Foundation's 800,000 members. In addition, the National Arbor Day Foundation will help extend the current informational resources by providing materials to state forestry agencies, University Cooperative Extension, and Soil and Water Conservation Districts, as well as other natural resource professionals for their use and promotion.

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